CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND SIXTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 24 April 1969, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

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PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:	Mr. S.A. FRAZAO
	Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA
	Mr. L.F. PALMEIRA LAMPREIA
	Mr. J. NOGUEIRA FILHO
Bulgaria:	Mr. K. CHRISTOV
	Mr. M. KARASSIMEONOV
	Mr. I. PEINIRDJIEV
Burma:	U KYAW MIN
Canada:	Mr. G. IGNATIEFF
	Mr. A.G. CAMPBELL
	Mr. J.R. MORDEN
Czechoslovakia:	Mr. T. LAHODA
	Mr. V. VAJNAR
	Mr. V. SAFAR
	Mr. J. STRUCKA
Ethiopia:	Mr. A. ZELLEKE
India:	Mr. M.A. HUSAIN
	Mr. N. KRISHNAN
	Mr. K.P. JAIN
Italy:	Mr. R. CARACCIOLO
	Mr. F. LUCIOLI OTTIERI
	Mr. R. BORSARELLI
	Mr. U. PESTALOZZA
Mexico:	Miss E. AGUIRRE
	Mr. H. CARDENAS RODRIGUEZ
Nigeria:	Mr. L.A. MALIKI

Poland:	Mr. H. JAROSZEK
	Mr. K. ZYBLSKI
	Mr. H. STROSZ
	Mr. R. LAZLO
Romania:	Mr. N. ECOHESCO
	Mr. V. CONSTANTINESCO
	Mr. V. TARZIORU
	Mr. C. GEORGESCO
Sweden:	Mrs. A. MYRDAL
	Mr. A. EDELSTAM
	Mr. T. WULFF
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:	Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
	Mr. O.A. GRINEVSKY
	Mr. I.I. TCHEPROV
	Mr. N.S. KISHILOV
United Arab Republic:	Mr. H. KHALLAF
	Mr. O. SIRRY
	Mr. E.S. El REEDY
	Mr. M. ISMAIL
United Kingdom:	Mr. I.F. PORTER
	Mr. W.N. HILLIER-FRY
	Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE
	Mr. M.E. HOWELL
United States of America:	Mr. A.S. FISHER
	Mr. C. GLEYSTEEN
	Mr. W. GIVAN
	Mr. R.L. McCORMACK
Special Representative of the Secretary-General:	Mr. D. PROTITCH
Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General:	Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)(translation from Russian): I declare open the 406th plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

2. Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland): It is gratifying to note that almost all the interventions we have heard in this Committee during the present session rightly expressed the view that the non-proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226*) is a very important achievement. The rapid implementation of the Treaty could indeed mark the beginning of a new stage in disarmament and security negotiations.

3. The Polish delegation in this Committee has always been of the opinion that while pursuing our main task of elaborating a treaty on general and complete disarmament we should seek agreements in other fields which, though not always disarmament measures sensu stricto, would contribute to the slowing down of the arms race and would facilitate the attainment of our main goal. Guided by that approach, we have put forward a number of collateral measures ourselves and we analyse in the same spirit the proposals put forward by other members of this Committee.

4. Today I should like to dwell on the Soviet draft treaty (ENDC/240) submitted here by the Soviet delegation on 18 March, on the prohibition of the use for military purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof. But before I present the position of my delegation on this subject may I be permitted to make a few remarks concerning our main task -- that is, the preparation of a draft treaty on general and complete disarmament. Almost all delegations have touched on this question at this session of the Committee and the representative of the Soviet Union -- that is, the Chairman of today's meeting -- devoted to it a special intervention (ENDC/PV.405, paras.36 et seq.) at our meeting on 22 April.

5. It is worth recalling, I think, that about this time seven years ago two significant documents were presented to this Committee. One was a draft treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict international control (ENDC/2*) submitted by the delegation of the USSR. The other was an outline of basic provisions of a treaty on general and complete disarmament in a peaceful world (ENDC/30 and Corr.1) presented by the delegation of the United States. If one takes into account the time factor envisaged for the different stages of disarmament in the two documents, we should by now be living

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in a disarmed world, probably discussing in another United Nations body big development projects -- projects which would have been made possible by the release of the resources used for the production of armaments. Unfortunately in reality, as we have been reminded by the Secretary-General, U Thant (ENDC/PV.395, para.4) the yearly world military expenditure has increased since 1962 from $120,000 million to more than $180,000 million.

6. It cannot be denied, however, that in the course of disarmament negotiations some significant results have been achieved, of which the latest, the non-proliferation Treaty, is undoubtedly of the greatest importance. On the other hand, we cannot forget that the agreements achieved so far consist of measures of a preventive nature, while the talks on general and complete disarmament practically have not left the stage of general debate as yet. Meanwhile the capacity for destruction has attained such a level that the very existence of mankind is constantly threatened. In such a situation it is not enough to express verbally one's commitment to the cause of peace, for so long as a system of nuclear weapons of an over-kill capacity is considered to be the basis for maintaining peace, so long will that peace remain highly precarious and indeed rather artificial. For years we have been repeating that it is the imminent possibility of a nuclear war that makes peace, in a system of collective security, so urgent.

7. From the very beginning of the disarmament negotiations Poland has insisted that the most important and urgent measures favouring the achievement of general and complete disarmament are those conducive to putting an end as quickly as possible to the threat of a nuclear war. May I in this respect recall operative paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 2454 B (XXIII)(ENDC/237) requesting this Committee to make renewed efforts towards achieving substantial progress in reaching agreement on the question of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, and urgently to analyse the plans already under consideration and others that might be put forward to see how, in particular, rapid progress could be made in the field of nuclear disarmament. The Polish delegation believes that a proper response to this demand should be an agreement dealing with specific measures of nuclear disarmament which should be carried out at the beginning of the disarmament process. Such an agreement or agreements should provide for definite time limits for the implementation of different measures.

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8. In this connexion it might be suggested that the co-Chairmen prepare a new draft agreement for the first stage of disarmament, a draft that would take into account the measures I have just mentioned.

9. As far as Poland is concerned, we are ready to play our part. In particular, we shall continue our efforts aiming at the establishment of lasting peace and security in Europe. We are convinced that regional disarmament measures will facilitate the removal of the main causes of tension, on the basis of existing political and territorial realities in Europe. Our first disarmament objective in Europe, as we have conceived it in our proposals (ENDC/C.1/1) for a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a nuclear "freeze", is to seek agreements on specific issues, agreements designed to eliminate the risk of a nuclear confrontation and to promote the prospect of collective security.

10. We realize that a number of difficult problems in Europe await solutions. But even a single agreement in the field of disarmament will make progress possible in other fields and will facilitate political solutions from which both East and West would benefit. The main ideas which I have been trying to expound are contained, it may be recalled, in the Budapest Appeal of 17 March by the States members of the Warsaw Pact addressed to all European States (ENDC/243).

11. I should like to turn now to the second problem I wish to discuss this morning, namely, the question of banning all military activities on the sea-bed and the ocean floor. My delegation has carefully studied the draft treaty presented by the Soviet Union (ENDC/240). We listened with interest to the detailed explanations concerning the draft treaty which were so ably and convincingly presented by you, Mr. Chairman, in your capacity as the representative of the USSR, in your statements on 18 March (ENDC/PV.395, paras.80-88) and 3 April (ENDC/PV.400, paras.2-36). The Polish delegation shares the following opinion expressed by the representative of the United Arab Republic, Ambassador Khallaf, on 15 April:

> "We feel that this draft reflects our basic position on the problem, which is to prohibit all military weapons and military activity on the sea-bed". (ENDC/PV.403, para.34)

We are also in full agreement with the view of the representative of India, Ambassador Husain, who stated on 17 April:

> "We should like to see the area of the sea-bed and ocean floor exploited exclusively for peaceful purposes". (ENDC/PV.404, para.66)

(Mr. Jaroszek, Poland)

12. I am glad to note that a number of other representatives have expressed similar views. I should like to mention, in particular, the very interesting statement made on 22 April by the representative of Sweden, Mrs. Myrdal. My delegation fully agrees with the Swedish point of view that "the prohibition must encompass all military installations" (ENDC/PV.405, para. 77) and, further, that "the geographical area to be covered by the prohibition should be as large as possible" (ibid.)

13. It has been stated repeatedly by nearly all the representatives in this Committee -- and the same is also true of the First Committee of the United Nations -- that it is incontestably easier to preclude an arms race in fields or regions where such a race has not yet started than to reduce armaments in areas where they have already been introduced. This is so self-evident that one hardly needs to enumerate examples in support of the argument. Let me, then, limit myself to two specific cases because both are greatly similar to the question we are now discussing.

14. I have in mind the Antarctic Treaty[1/] and the Treaty concerning the exploration of outer space (General Assembly resolution 2222 (XXI) annex) adopted in 1959 and 1966 respectively, after difficult but nevertheless relatively short and smooth negotiations when compared with our negotiations on disarmament. Their similarity to each other, as well as to the draft treaty on the demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor (ENDC/240), stems from the fact that they all apply to areas with similar juridical status and that all those areas are at present hardly accessible for normal human activities.

15. Article I of the Antarctic Treaty states:

> "Antarctica shall be used for peaceful purposes only. There shall be prohibited, inter alia, any measures of a military nature, such as the establishment of military bases and fortifications, the carrying out of military manoeuvres, as well as the testing of any type of weapons".

16. Article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and other Celestial Bodies states:

1/ United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 402, pp. 71 et seq.

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"The Moon and other celestial bodies shall be used by all States Parties to the Treaty exclusively for peaceful purposes. The establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military manoeuvres on celestial bodies shall be forbidden".

17. I hope that I shall not be abusing your patience, Mr. Chairman, if in this connexion I quote article I of the draft treaty on the prohibition of the use for military purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, submitted by the delegation of the Soviet Union on 18 March 1969:

"The use for military purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof beyond the twelve-mile maritime zone of coastal States is prohibited.

"It is prohibited to place on the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoi thereof objects with nuclear weapons or any other types of weapons of mass destruction, and to set up military bases, structures, installations, fortifications and other objects of a military nature."

18. As can be seen, no special effort is required to observe that the Soviet draft treaty is based on the same ideas and principles as the two Treaties to which I have just referred. Since Poland is a party to those Treaties, we believe that it is only proof of a consistent policy for us to support also the Soviet draft treaty.

19. The Polish delegation is of the strong opinion that the demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor would be an important step on the way to achieving other disarmament measures sensu stricto. On the other hand, the limitation of the scope of the treaty to weapons of mass destruction alone would be contrary to General Assembly resolutions 2467 A (XXIII) and 2340 (XXII) on the question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof. Such a limitation might also be interpreted by some States as complete freedom to set up conventional military installations on the sea-bed and the ocean floor, for example, in the vicinity of the territorial waters of other States, which would inevitably lead to the escalation of international tension.

20. Another argument against the limitation of the scope of the proposed treaty is that modern sophisticated weapons, such as missiles, torpedoes, mines and so on, can be used for both conventional and nuclear means of warfare. It is true that

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economists may argue that it would not pay to install on the bottom of the sea platforms or other launching devices for non-nuclear missiles because their cost would outweigh their military significance. But, as we all know, such arguments have not always prevailed, and the possibility of using conventional installations for nuclear means of warfare in a critical situation may be tempting. The road to such possible future temptations and risks should, therefore, be barred before it is too late.

21. It seems to us that the implementation of the treaty banning the use for any military purpose of the sea-bed and the ocean floor could be more adequately verified than could the observance of a treaty providing for a partial ban related to weapons of mass destruction only. Here again the Soviet draft bears a fundamental similarity to the relevant article of the Antarctic Treaty of 1959. As far as we know, since the entry into force of that Treaty there has been no complaint from States parties against other signatories of alleged violations of the Treaty provisions. That means that the verification system provided for in that agreement has met the expectations. We note with satisfaction that the draft we have before us is based on the same principle as the verification system established under the Antarctic Treaty -- a system which has proved to be efficacious in practice.

22. We are witnessing at present a tremendous development of science and technology and we should not be surprised if in only a few years from now the establishment of military installations even on the deep ocean floor becomes less difficult than the setting up of similar installations in Antarctica today or on the moon tomorrow. Therefore, if we in this Committee really want to preclude an arms race on the sea-bed and the ocean floor — as I believe we do — we should concert our efforts with a view to reaching, as speedily as possible, an agreement providing for the full demilitarization of those areas.

23. We are in full agreement with the opinion expressed here by the representative of Mexico on 10 April, when he urged that progress in this field should be achieved in the course of the present session of the Eighteen-Nation Committee (ENDC/PV.402, para. 27).

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24. The territorial scope of the proposed prohibition is of no less importance than its substantive provisions. It is closely linked with a controversial issue in international law, namely, how far the jurisdiction of coastal States extends in the direction of the high sea, both on the sea surface and on the sea-bed adjacent to the coastal State. Two Geneva conferences, held in 1958 and 1960 respectively, and the four Geneva Conventions of 1958 and the law of the seas have not succeeded in establishing a universally accepted solution of that so often disputed problem. The solution provided for in the draft treaty presented by the delegation of the Soviet Union seems to advance a very effective way of overcoming that difficulty for the purposes of the treaty.

25. My delegation is of the opinion that it would not be practical to link the external limits of the zone beyond which the prohibition of military activities in the framework of the proposed treaty should apply to the limits of territorial waters or to the limits of the jurisdiction of States over the sea-bed or the continental shelf.

26. As we understand it, the Soviet draft provides for the establishment of a twelve-mile maritime zone on the adjacent sea-bed solely for the purposes of this treaty. The zone thus established would in no way imply the recognition or the rejection by the contracting parties of any claims to the territorial waters or the continental shelf.

27. I should like to recall that the establishment of a special maritime zone for a particular purpose is not without precedent in international law. For instance the second Geneva Convention of 1958[2] accords the coastal States the right to set up, in certain circumstances, special maritime zones for fiscal purposes or for customs, sanitary or immigration control, beyond the limits of territorial waters. (article 24) On the other hand, the fourth Geneva Convention of 1958[3] also provides in certain circumstances, for the establishment of special zones for the purpose of fishing. (article 7)

2/ Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone. United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 516, p. 205 et seq.

3/ Convention on Fishing and Conservation of the Living Resources of the High Seas. United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 559, p. 285 et seq.

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28. The outer limit of the twelve-mile maritime zone established for the purposes of the treaty should, in the opinion of the Polish delegation, be measured from the same base lines as are used in defining the limits of the territorial waters of coastal States. That is provided for in article 3 of the Soviet draft. However, from the legal point of view, that special zone, like the special zones provided for in the Geneva Conventions of 1958 on the law of the seas, would be completely independent of the concept of territorial waters or the concept of jurisdiction over the continental shelf.

29. Another argument strongly favouring the separation for the purpose of the treaty of the special zone from areas subject to the sovereignty and jurisdiction of coastal States may be found in article 2 of the third Geneva Convention of 1958, on the Continental Shelf.4/ That article states, inter alia, that:

"The coastal State exercises over the continental shelf sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources".

Since there are seas, such as the Baltic Sea, whose entire subsoil is a continental shelf, the provisions of the envisaged treaty should necessarily cover such shallow seas also. My country is particularly interested in this question. We have noted that a similar concern was expressed by the representative of Sweden in her statement on 22 April (ENDC/PV.405, para. 78). My delegation is happy to note that the draft treaty deals with this question in the right way. The principle contained therein has already been introduced into practice by the signing on 23 October 1968 of the Declaration concerning the continental shelf of the Baltic Sea by the Governments of the German Democratic Republic, the Polish People's Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. That Declaration states, inter alia, that:

"The continental shelf of the Baltic Sea should be used by all States exclusively for peaceful purposes".

30. Poland is among the ten largest shipbuilders of the world. In our economic plans we provide for further development of this important branch of our industry. We realize that the shipping of tomorrow will be based mainly on large container units. For that reason the entrance to the Baltic Sea as well as to a number of important Baltic harbours, including Polish harbours, will have to be deepened. We believe that the conclusion and the entry into force of a treaty banning the use for

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4/ United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 499, p. 311 et seq.

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military purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof will open the way to intensive peaceful international co-operation aimed at finding the most suitable solutions to problems of the kind I have just mentioned in respect to the Baltic Sea. We hope that the day is not too far off when all the Baltic States will join together in proclaiming the Baltic Sea a sea of peaceful relations among its coastal States.

31. In conclusion, allow me to express the conviction that this Committee will be able at its present session to achieve substantial progress in elaborating a treaty which will secure the use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor as well as their subsoil exclusively for peaceful purposes.

32. Mr. CHRISTOV (Bulgaria) (translation from French): For some time -- indeed, perhaps ever since the beginning of the present session -- delegations in this Committee have been constantly wondering what would be the best way to make our discussion fruitful and to ensure that it leads to concrete results. The suggestions and proposals made in this respect unquestionably express the common concern of us all. Certainly there is nothing to be said against what appears, in the opinion of all delegations, to be a necessary condition for improving and accelerating our work.

33. However, we cannot fail to point out that it is necessary to bear in mind certain factors and, first of all, the time factor. More than a month has passed since the resumption of our work. If we follow our usual practice, we shall soon have to think of setting a date for the adjournment of this part of our session. In any case, we have only a few weeks left. Obviously, in that time it will not be possible for us to carry out a thorough study of all the questions on the agenda (ENDC/236,p.3) since there is a rather large number of them. Consequently, it would be more appropriate and useful to concentrate the attention of the Committee on two or three problems. That is how I have understood some of the suggestions made during recent meetings.

34. If that is so, and if we must decide which problems should thus be given the highest priority, it is essential, in our opinion, that we should be guided by certain basic ideas and, in the first place, by the idea of the need to take measures recognized as being absolutely indispensable and urgent in order to stop the arms race before it gains new ground; by the idea of the need to promote measures which can play a considerable role as tangible proofs of the political will to reverse the trend towards acceleration of the arms race; and also by the idea of the need to solve those problems which are ripe for solution in order, finally, to take a concrete step towards disarmament.

(Mr. Christov, Bulgaria)

35. My delegation considers that three of the problems on the agenda meet objectively all the conditions required for a rapid solution and that, on the basis of the ideas I have just expressed, they must be examined as a matter of priority. I refer to the problems of the drafting of an international agreement to prohibit the use for military purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, the conclusion of a convention banning the use of nuclear weapons and the conclusion of an agreement to put an end to underground nuclear tests.

36. We shall revert on another occasion to the first of those problems -- the demilitarization of the sea-bed -- but since it has been raised, I would say in passing that it is more than necessary to speed up the discussion, because experience has shown that the more slowly one proceeds the greater is the risk that complications may arise. I do not need to dwell on another phenomenon that occurs fairly often, namely, that beating about the bush encourages those who have an interest in preventing the solution of a particular problem. The time lost by the negotiators is used by the promoters of the arms race.

37. Having said that, I should now like to make some brief comments on the other two questions, which, like that of the sea-bed, should, as we see it, receive our attention during the next few weeks in preference to any other question.

38. The position of the Bulgarian delegation on the first of those problems, namely, the conclusion of a convention outlawing the use of nuclear weapons, is well-known; it has been restated and explained on several occasions. The Bulgarian Government has always warmly supported and continues to support the idea of concluding a convention to that end as quickly as possible. We consider that such a convention would have a vast repercussion on the international situation and would contribute to creating a favourable climate for all the discussions on disarmament.

39. We are happy to note that this position has been adopted by the great majority of States in the world. During sessions of the United Nations General Assembly -- and whenever this problem is on the agenda -- the great majority of the representatives of the international community have expressed their categorical support for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, a prohibition which they regard as one of the most urgent needs of our time. However, I have ventured to revert to that question, not to recall things that do not need to be recalled, but rather to try to examine the problem in the light of certain new elements which, in our opinion, give reason for fresh hope. Those elements, in our opinion, are the following.

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40. First of all, in the situation created by the non-proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226*) the conclusion of an agreement banning the use of nuclear weapons would create a new dimension on the legal and political levels for all non-nuclear-weapon countries which have acceded, or are going to accede, to the Treaty. For, as has been pertinently pointed out, such a ban would have the value of being a first practical step towards the elimination of inequalities and differences among States, based upon the possession or non-possession of nuclear weapons.

41. Secondly, it must be borne in mind that at present the solution of the problem depends only on the attitude and the positions in respect to it of the nuclear-weapon Powers. The position of the Soviet Union is well known. The Soviet Union has been asking for the outlawing of atomic weapons since the day they made their appearance. The Soviet Government gave this question first place in its memorandum of 1 July 1968 (ENDC/227). That position was reaffirmed by you, Mr. Chairman, in your capacity as representative of the Soviet Union, in the statement you made on Thursday 10 April (ENDC/PV.402, paras. 41 et seq.). In that important statement you stressed the will of the Soviet Union to seek new ways to resolve the problem of banning the use of nuclear weapons; and you explained that one of those ways was to assume, for example, an obligation not to use nuclear weapons as a means of attack.

42. In our opinion, this is a path which, together with other restraints -- such as the establishment of denuclearized zones -- could lead us to a whole series of political decisions which would undoubtedly have an extremely favourable influence on the development of relations between nuclear Powers and between nuclear and non-nuclear Powers, and on the Committee's chances of carrying on its work in a more propitious climate.

43. Finally, another element which encourages us to stress the urgency of the problem of banning nuclear weapons is the way in which the question of banning chemical and biological weapons is now posed. I shall not speak about that, since a more thorough discussion will be possible after the submission of the report of the group of experts that is now at work. However, as we did at the last session, we must point out again that chemical and bacteriological weapons are not the only ones in the category of weapons of mass destruction. If we were to try to establish a scale of horrors and put each weapon of mass destruction in its proper place in relation to the others, we feel it would be very difficult to say which weapon was the most horrible and the most lethal. In any event, we do not believe that nuclear weapons should be put at the bottom of the scale.

(Mr. Christov, Bulgaria)

44. It is very comforting to hear it said that biological weapons are universally condemned. Allow me to observe in this connexion that if that is so, it is due to the universal condemnation of their use constituted by the Geneva Protocol of 1925. It is precisely the existence of an instrument of international law such as the Geneva Protocol that has created so powerful a current of opinion against the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons that the very idea of having recourse to such weapons is today intolerable and arouses universal indignation. We are convinced that the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons will play the same role.

45. That being the case, we have the right to believe and demand that all weapons of mass destruction, including in the first place the most powerful and the most terrifying, should likewise be condemned universally; otherwise, we should have to resign ourselves to thinking that the refusal by certain Powers to renounce the use of nuclear weapons is connected precisely with the terrible effectiveness of those weapons, which is beyond imagination. We feel that in seeking ways and means to stop the arms race and bring about nuclear disarmament, we have no right to deprive mankind of all the political and legal instruments which have proved their worth, as the Geneva Protocol has done. We should even devise others; we cannot allow ourselves to renounce such a powerful psychological and political means as the outlawing of nuclear weapons would undoubtedly be.

46. For all those reasons my delegation is of the opinion that the Committee should devote the most sustained efforts to the discussion of the problem of banning the use of nuclear weapons. In the present context of disarmament problems and in the light of the new ideas suggested, which in themselves already represent a considerable step forward, it is impossible, in our opinion, to agree that everything has been said and still less that everything has been done as regards the solution of a problem of such great importance.

47. One of the questions which have been in the forefront of our discussions for a number of years is the conclusion of an agreement to put an end to underground nuclear weapon tests. The importance of this question has been highlighted by a large number of documents. I shall confine myself to mentioning resolution 2455 k(XXIII) in which the General Assembly

> "Taking into account the existing possibilities of establishing, through international co-operation, a voluntary exchange of seismic data so as to create a better scientific basis for a national evaluation of seismic events",

(Mr. Christov, Bulgaria)

"Recognizing the importance of seismology in the verification of the observance of a treaty banning underground nuclear weapon tests," (ENDC/237) requested the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to take up as a matter of urgency the elaboration of a treaty banning underground nuclear weapon tests.

48. The delegations which have taken part so far in the discussion, including the Bulgarian delegation, have all agreed in acknowledging that, in accordance with the aforesaid resolution, priority must be given to this problem. On 1 April 1969 the Swedish delegation submitted a "Working Paper with suggestions as to possible provisions of a Treaty Banning Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests" (ENDC/242). On behalf of my delegation, I congratulate the Swedish delegation on this initiative, which we consider to be a further contribution by it to the discussion of the problem - a contribution which we believe broadens the prospects for fruitful work in the right direction by the Committee.

49. The basic concept on which the document put forward by the Swedish delegation rests and the means which are set out therein for concluding an agreement are of great interest and merit the closest attention. We are convinced that the study of the concrete proposals contained in that document would bring us closer to our goal and would make it possible to draw up texts that could meet all the requirements to which such a treaty must respond.

50. The position of the Bulgarian delegation in that respect is quite clear. We firmly support the request for the prohibition of underground tests as an absolute necessity and as a pre-condition indissolubly linked to any further progress in the discussion on disarmament. We are convinced that a treaty prohibiting underground tests can be concluded on the basis of the possibilities of control using national means of detection that science has developed, and through an effective organization of scientific and technical apparatus for detecting and identifying the nature of seismic phenomena.

51. The progress recorded in this field during recent years offers a real safe-guard against any violation of an international treaty. One fact, we believe, is undeniable, namely that with the present level of improvement of instruments for detecting seismic phenomena and with an appropriate geographical distribution, it would be impossible for anyone to conduct an underground test and to violate the concluded agreement. In this respect we share the opinion of the representative of Sweden, Mrs. Myrdal, who said:

(Mr. Christov, Bulgaria)

"It is my strong conviction, in spite of assertions to the contrary by some Powers, that the technical control issue cannot be regarded as the decisive problem. The crux is political." (ENDC/PV.399, para. 12)

During my first intervention, on 27 March, I pointed out that the solution of disarmament problems depends on a definite political choice, and the result obtained is, in the final analysis, only the expression of a resolute political will (ENDC/PV.398, para. 4).

52. The negotiation of the problem of the total prohibition of nuclear tests affords in this respect a most significant example and irrefutable proof of the fact that it is the lack of a political choice that causes the possibility of an agreement to fade away each time an effort is designed to bring us closer to the solution.

53. The choice at present is between a policy of arms race and a policy of disarmament. It seems to us that throughout our discussion much has been said - and on many occasions - about the alleged risks of disarmament, while almost every day the risks, the real risks, of the arms race are increasing, a race of which underground tests are the most disturbing aspect at the present time.

54. We are far from wishing to simplify matters, but it is clear that at the stage at which we have arrived a solution of this vitally important problem can be regarded as within the reach of the Committee. All the factors are there for us to engage in a thorough discussion with a view to concluding within the shortest time an agreement which would open the way to other disarmament measures, as well as new prospects in the field of the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

55. We are encouraged by the fact that a number of delegations in our Committee have reached the conclusion that it is not technical requirements that are barring the way to an agreement on the cessation of underground tests. Without any doubt, at this decisive stage of our work, only a firm and unequivocal political decision would make it possible to overcome the remaining obstacles.

56. The CHAIRMAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translation from Russian): In my capacity as Chairman of today's meeting I should like to make the following announcement on behalf of the two co-Chairmen.

"A request has been received from the delegation of the United Kingdom for the convening on 14 May 1969 of an informal meeting of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to discuss the question of the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons" --

to use the wording of the Committee's agenda.

(The Chairman, USSR)

"A request has also been received from the delegation of Sweden for the convening on 21 May of an informal meeting of the Committee to discuss the question of a comprehensive ban on the testing of nuclear weapons.

"In accordance with the agreed procedure for convening informal meetings, those two meetings will be held, in conformity with the requests made to the co-Chairmen, on 14 May and 21 May at 10.30 a.m."

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 406th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador A.A. Roshchin, representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

"Statements were made by the representatives of Poland and Bulgaria.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 29 April 1969, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.